



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Scott Wardrop Esq  
Group Managing Director  
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7<sup>th</sup> March 2013

AJT/CD/Asphalt Plant

Dear Mr Wardrop,

**Re : Eurovia Roadstone on the Isle of Wight**

I am writing because I have serious concerns about a number of issues related to Eurovia Roadstone's plans to build an asphalt plant on the Isle of Wight and the company's refusal to answer reasonable questions from local residents.

I should make it clear at the outset that I believe the proposed location of this plant is highly inappropriate because it is far too close to housing, a sensitive river environment and a large employer who operate clean rooms with closely controlled air quality. However, that is for the planning authorities to determine, and of course I have no greater role in that process than any other local resident. In fact I only infrequently make formal representations on planning matters because as the local Member of Parliament I am often consulted or asked for advice by 'both sides'.

The concerns I wish to raise with you are not planning issues but matters of integrity and openness – which your website says are among the core values of your company.

1. In September last year I attended a packed public meeting in East Cowes about your proposals to build an asphalt plant. I asked what contingency plans were in place should planning permission for the asphalt plant be refused. Patrick Reilly, a director of Eurovia Roadstone told the meeting 'I believe that there are a lot of contingency plans well advanced'. He would not be drawn

**Andrew Turner: Member of Parliament for the Isle of Wight**



further. I followed that up with the Isle of Wight Council and put out a press release (attached) calling for clarity on the proposed alternative arrangements – which has not been forthcoming.

I have subsequently seen an e-mail sent on 8<sup>th</sup> January, to a local resident, Tony King, from David Marsh, which includes the following information:

‘Presently, there is an asphalt plant on the island but the operator has made it known that it is not capable of supplying the necessary materials to the PFI contract. It is not possible to supply all the materials for the PFI contract from the mainland either. Consequently, a new facility is needed, hence the application being considered at Medina Wharf.’

A statement on your company website says :

*Mr Marsh is a planning consultant to Eurovia Roadstone and the statement in the email addressed to Mr King reflects his view point on behalf of Eurovia Roadstone, and not one from the Highways PFI Contract.*

As your statement makes clear, Eurovia Roadstone’s position is not the same as the Isle of Wight Council’s – the Council has repeatedly said there is no requirement for a new local asphalt plant to supply the PFI contract.

The two positions are contradictory – and cannot both stand. The PFI contract can be delivered without a new asphalt plant on the Island - or it cannot. If it can, Eurovia are misleading the public; if it cannot I am alarmed that you should have entered into a contract without knowing how it could be fulfilled.

I would therefore be grateful if you could give me a straightforward and honest answer to the following question

*Are you able to deliver your contractual obligations under the Isle of Wight PFI without a new asphalt plant located on the Island?*

2. At the same meeting Patrick Reilly clearly said that the new plant would create employment on the Island – and gave that as a reason why the local community should support the proposals; however that statement has been questioned. Your planning application suggests that 12 new jobs would be created – I suspect that does not take account of any possible job losses in the existing asphalt plant.

Of course similar claims were made about the PFI contract as a whole bringing significant new employment opportunities for Islanders – which I



understand were finally admitted to be false at a meeting last December. In view of that I would be grateful if you will confirm that should planning permission be granted and any new jobs created that you would actively look to recruit existing Island residents - training them if necessary. Specifically I would be grateful for your assurance that you will not move staff from elsewhere in the Eurovia group to fill any new vacancies.

3. In September last year I issued a further press release, (copy attached) because I was concerned that GKN, a major employer located close to the proposed plant had not been contacted about the proposals. In response the local press was told by Patrick Reilly, that I was welcome to go to the public consultation event to discuss my concerns. This was the day before the event and because of existing commitments I was unable to attend. However, a member of my staff did attend and was told by David Marsh that I had been 'contacted and invited to a meeting'. That was completely untrue. After that event my office contacted Eurovia Roadstone no fewer than six times; four by telephone and twice by e-mail. Beyond broken promises to get back to us there was no response.
4. I was concerned that no information event was organised until after the formal public consultation period had ended. My staff member was told that was of no importance because the Isle of Wight Council would take account of late submissions. Whilst it is true that the Council have done so – they are not obliged to. That was outside the control of Eurovia and the event should clearly have taken place whilst the formal consultation period was open.
5. A paper presentation was given at the information event. One of the pre-prepared sheets claimed that no toxins at all are involved in the process of producing asphalt.. When my staff member pointed out that she didn't believe this, Eurovia representatives David Marsh and Patrick Reilly, argued with her. By chance my employee attended the same presentation as Julia Hill, a local opponent of the asphalt plant who was well informed; and she listed many toxins involved in the process. Eurovia representatives eventually admitted their statement was untrue. When a local journalist came across to the table the page was hurriedly removed from the presentation.
6. There are a number of widespread concerns about how this highly controversial application is being handled by your company. For example I understand Eurovia have announced that no asbestos has been found on the site. It has been publicly alleged that asbestos was not tested for, and as far as I can ascertain Eurovia have not responded. If it is true that asbestos has not



been looked for it is hardly surprising that it has not been found! I have also been told that concerns have been raised that the boreholes used to test for contaminants were located outside the area likely to be contaminated, but no proper answers have been forthcoming.

7. Eurovia representatives have repeatedly claimed (not least during the public meeting in East Cowes) that the proposal is for 'a state of the art' plant using the latest technology, yet I understand that some of the equipment they propose to use is second hand and more than 20 years old.
8. I understand that Eurovia planned to use mobile permits from a mainland authority to operate some of the plant equipment. I was pleased to read in the most recent papers from the Isle of Wight Council Regulatory Committee that they have received legal advice that will prevent this. However, it seems to me fundamentally dishonest to attempt to operate a permanent plant under a mobile licence issued in another area. It appears that Eurovia were simply using this as a device to avoid possible difficulties in getting permits granted at this very sensitive location. I look forward to receiving your response to these concerns, but plan to write to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on this point.
9. There is now only a matter of three weeks before the road improvements should actually start to get underway. I understand there is still no indication from you where you will be sourcing asphalt from – other than a denial that you have entered into any supply arrangement with Bardon Vectis. Local press have regularly asked for information and are simply rebuffed each week. On the Island we are fortunate to have independently owned and sensible local media – in view of your professed commitment to openness I am surprised that you have refused to engage positively with them.
10. My staff member who attended your information event was told there would be 'financial penalties' if asphalt were to be shipped across the Solent due to environmental constraints in the PFI contract. Can you please confirm that any financial penalties incurred will not be passed on to local council taxpayers (or indeed taxpayers in general) in the form of increased payments to Vinci Ringway, Eurovia or any related company if you decide to ship asphalt across from the mainland?
11. A group has been set up to oppose Eurovia's proposals (WRAP – Wight Residents against the Asphalt Plant). Instead of answering their legitimate concerns – I am told that Eurovia Roadstone have treated them merely as an



irritant. I request that you ensure that this group of local residents (and any others) who have valid concerns and questions are engaged with properly and their issues addressed fully and honestly. Should you wish to contact them directly you can do so by e-mail on [wrapmedina@live.co.uk](mailto:wrapmedina@live.co.uk).

I welcome your comments on each of the foregoing points and in particular your answer to the question at the end of the first point.

I am encouraged to read on your website that your company is proud of your resilience and see failure as an opportunity to learn. Clearly you have created many such opportunities in your dealings to date with the Island community I represent.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Turner'.

**Andrew Turner**  
Member of Parliament for the Isle of Wight

cc : Isle of Wight County Council  
WRAP

[REDACTED]

Date: 03 Sep 2012

At a packed public meeting in East Cowes last month the Island's MP Andrew Turner asked representatives from Eurovia Roadstone, the company behind the controversial plans for an asphalt plant in Cowes, what alternative plans were in place to supply asphalt to fulfil the Island's roads PFI contract if their planning application were to be refused.

Mr Turner was told by Patrick Reilly, the company's Divisional Director, that :  
'I believe that there are a lot of contingency plans well advanced'.


Although he made it clear he was not speaking as a representative of Vinci Ringway, the PFI contractor, Eurovia Roadstone are a subsidiary of that company.

Mr Turner said:

"I have followed Mr Reilly's comments up. I have been told that the Council has no contingency plans for an alternative supply of asphalt – because they don't need them. Under the contract it is a matter for the contractor where they source their materials. As Mr Reilly is clearly aware that contingency plans are in place then he must be talking about plans that have been developed by Vinci Ringway. They should come clean and tell Islanders what they will do if this application is refused. Will they come to a supply agreement with the existing asphalt plant at Blackwater Quarry, submit plans for another plant elsewhere, or bring asphalt across the Solent from the mainland?"

He added :

"I understand that Eurovia Roadstone have said that they want to make sure their relationship with residents is positive. I assume that Vinci Ringway would also say the same. They can start now by being up-front about what alternative plans they are considering should this planning application be refused."



Date: 27 Sep 2012

Andrew Turner, the Island's MP, has slammed Eurovia Roadstone, the company behind the controversial asphalt plant proposals in Arctic Road, Cowes for the way they have handled the planning application.

Mr Turner attended the packed public meeting in East Cowes Town Hall last month where residents asked a number of questions which were not answered, including one he asked himself about what Eurovia's plans were, should their application be refused.

Despite telling those present that further meetings would be held to enable people to respond to the public consultation, Eurovia have now arranged two dates which fall after the consultation period has closed. It has also emerged that they have failed to consult GKN Aerospace, who operate in East Cowes, about how they could be affected by emissions from the proposed Asphalt plant.

Mr Turner said,

"I have been watching this situation with increasing concern – it is a textbook example on the wrong way for applicants to deal planning applications.

"At the public information evening Eurovia representatives failed to answer perfectly reasonable questions from people whose lives would be affected by their plans. Then we learn they are planning to give further information about their proposals - but only after the public consultation period has closed. It smacks of incompetence or, even worse, a deliberate attempt to ensure that the public are not properly able to respond to what they know are highly controversial plans.

"Now we hear that GKN have not even been consulted about the proposed plant and how any emissions might affect them. GKN need clean rooms at both their sites with closely controlled air quality. If the wind blows the asphalt plant emissions towards them it could shut them down completely or cause damage to high specification aerospace components under manufacture. Either scenario would cost GKN many hundreds of thousands – or even millions - of pounds.

"GKN provide 1,200 high quality jobs which are hugely important to the Island's economy – if GKN start to lose contracts because of interruptions to their manufacturing process or damage to key components it will doubtless cost the Island jobs. It seems as if Eurovia have not done their homework properly before putting in this application."